

Additional Views
The Promoting Safe and Stable Families Amendments of 2001

October 31, 2001

We support the extension of the current Promoting Safe and Stable Families program. However, we lament the fact that the Committee's bill fails to guarantee new funding for this program as proposed by President Bush and as permitted by Congress' Budget Resolution. We do not believe that the terrorists attacks of September 11th should deter us from making the necessary investments to protect abused and neglected children, to help reunite families involved in the child welfare system, and to promote the adoption of children when they cannot safely return home. We reject the notion that our Nation can afford \$150 billion in mostly misguided tax breaks, which passed the House just last week, but cannot afford a little over \$1 billion to help and protect vulnerable children.

Merely authorizing new money for this program makes it very unlikely that all of the new resources promised by the Administration will actually materialize. In fact, appropriations legislation that has already passed the House provided only \$70 million of the total \$327 million requested by the President to improve the child welfare system – that is only 22 cents for every dollar that is needed.

As originally proposed by President Bush, we support providing \$1 billion in new mandatory money for the Promoting Safe and Stable Families Program over five years and \$300 million over five years for educational assistance for former foster children. In 2002 alone, these new resources could provide services to roughly an additional 76,000 families involved in the child welfare system and provide educational

assistance to about 12,000 youths who have aged out of foster care.

The current downturn in the economy will impose additional strains on at-risk families and therefore only increase the need for counseling, caseworker oversight, substance abuse treatment, mental health services, respite care, domestic violence assistance, post-adoption services and other family supports funded by the Promoting Safe and Stable Families Program. We should seize this opportunity to ensure the needed resources for these services are made available.

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